



Letter No. 3630
Friday, August 19, 2011
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3630

Friday, August 19, 2011

(August 19)

SOME GOOD ECONOMIC NEWS AMIDST THE BAD

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack repeated some good economic news for his audience at the Iowa State Fair.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16033>

WHAT BUDGET CUTS COULD MEAN FOR THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

For at least one of President Obama's cabinet budget cuts are not a reason for screaming and gnashing of teeth.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16032>

USDA SIGNS NEW AGREEMENT WITH COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS

Rural areas could benefit from a new agreement between USDA and the Council on Foundations.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16031>

(August 18)

**Ag SEC VILSACK SAYS HE WILL INFORM EPA ABOUT
FARM EFFECTS OF ANY PROPOSED REGS**

Secretary Vilsack says he's looking out for farm interests when it comes to proposed new regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16022>

VILSACK ANNOUNCES RURAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES FUNDING

Facilities from schools to nursing homes are covered under this latest White House Rural Council related announcement.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16020>

RURAL ENTITIES REAPING MONEY FOR ENERGY PROJECTS

Over 900 agricultural producers and rural small business will have help in implementing renewable energy measures.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16021>

NEW FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS SET FOR HEAVY DUTY PICKUP TRUCKS

The government's newly announced fuel efficiency standards for heavy duty trucks and buses also cover heavy duty pickups that many farmers use.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16006>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16005>

(August 17)

**PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES NEW JOBS INITIATIVES
FOR RURAL AMERICA**

The investments focus on increasing access to capital, job training and health care services. The new jobs initiatives recommended by the White House Rural Council is designed to grow the economy and creating jobs in rural America. The Council's recommendations focus on key areas of need in rural communities, including helping rural small businesses access capital, expanding rural job search and training services, and increasing rural access to health care workers and technology.

"These are tough times for a lot of Americans – including those who live in our rural communities," said President Obama. "That's why my administration has put a special focus on helping rural families find jobs, grow their businesses, and regain a sense of economic security."

"Creating jobs and economic opportunity in rural America is a priority for the Obama Administration, and the White House Rural Council has used an 'all hands on deck' approach to leverage resources across the federal government to achieve that goal," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "By bringing new capital, job training, and additional investments to our rural communities, we are working to ensure the people who live in these towns have a better, brighter future."

"SBA is pleased to announce that we will be doubling the capital going to rural businesses through the Small Business Investment Company program, with no cost to tax payers," said Administrator Karen Mills. "Small businesses of all kinds are thriving in rural areas where they are creating jobs of the future and helping ensure the economic stability of the middle class. Half the people who work in America either own or work for a small business, and two out of three new private sector jobs are created by small businesses. The Obama Administration and SBA have been committed to supporting rural businesses, which drive economic growth across the country and will continue to do so through the programs announced today."

The Council's recommendations, which leverage existing programs and funding, include committing \$350 million in SBA funding to rural small businesses over the next 5 years, launching a series of conferences to connect private equity and venture capital investors with rural start ups, creating capital marketing teams to pitch federal funding opportunities to private investors interested in making rural investments, making job search information available at 2,800 local USDA offices nationwide, making HHS loans available to help more than 1,300 Critical Access Hospitals recruit additional staff, and helping rural hospitals purchase software and hardware to implement health IT.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16014>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16011>

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR OVER 900 PROJECTS TO BOOST RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION, REDUCE ENERGY COSTS FOR PRODUCERS AND SMALL BUSINESSES

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced grants for more than 900 agricultural producers and rural small businesses across the country to implement renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in their operations. Secretary Vilsack made the announcement as part of President Obama's rural economic bus tour in the Midwest where today he highlighted efforts underway to reduce our country's dependence on foreign oil, which will increase the economic competitiveness of rural America and promote job creation.

"These investments enable our farmers, ranchers and rural small business owners to develop renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements that will save them thousands of dollars in energy costs each year," Vilsack said. "This funding is an important part of the Obama Administration's plan to conserve natural resources, create jobs and lead our country on the path to becoming more energy independent."

The grants are being provided through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), a 2008 Farm Bill initiative. REAP offers funds for farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. These federal funds leverage other funding sources for small businesses. In all, USDA announced more than \$11.6 million in energy grants today.

The REAP program is helping many agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy consumption. For example, Simpsons Brothers Greenhouses, LLC in Ovid, Mich., was selected to receive an \$18,000 grant to make energy-efficiency improvements to its greenhouse operations, including installing greenhouse energy curtains that are designed to reduce energy consumption. These improvements are expected to reduce the company's energy purchases by 42 percent and save more than \$12,000 in annual energy expenses.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

(August 16)

PRESIDENT OBAMA ANNOUNCES MAJOR INITIATIVE TO SPUR BIOFUELS INDUSTRY AND ENHANCE AMERICA'S ENERGY SECURITY

The USDA, Department of Energy and Navy partner to advance biofuels, to fuel military and commercial transportation, displace need for foreign oil, and strengthen rural America. It's an investment up to \$510 million during the next three years in partnership with the private sector to produce advanced drop-in aviation and marine biofuels to power military and commercial transportation. The initiative responds to a directive from President Obama issued in March as part of his *Blueprint for A Secure Energy Future*, the Administration's framework for reducing dependence on foreign oil. The biofuels initiative is being steered by the White House Biofuels Interagency Work Group and Rural Council, both of which are enabling greater cross-agency collaboration to strengthen rural America.

"Biofuels are an important part of reducing America's dependence on foreign oil and creating jobs here at home," said President Obama. "But supporting biofuels cannot be the role of government alone. That's why we're partnering with the private sector to speed development of next-generation biofuels that will help us continue to take steps towards energy independence and strengthen communities across our country."

Increased use of advanced biofuels is a key component of the Administration's energy security agenda, but there is currently a lack of this manufacturing capability for next-generation drop-in biofuels in the United States. To accelerate the production of bio-based jet and diesel fuel for military and commercial purposes, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus [have developed a plan](#) to jointly construct or retrofit several drop-in biofuel plants and refineries. This effort will help address energy security and national security challenges, and will provide economic opportunities in rural America.

"America's long-term national security depends upon a commercially viable domestic biofuels market that will benefit taxpayers while simultaneously giving Sailors and Marines tactical and strategic advantages," said Navy Secretary Ray Mabus. "Today's announcement not only leverages our home grown fuel sources to support our national security, but it also helps advance the biofuels market, which ultimately brings down the cost of biofuels for everyone."

"By building a national biofuels industry, we are creating construction jobs, refinery jobs and economic opportunity in rural communities throughout the country," said Agriculture Secretary Vilsack. "As importantly, every gallon of biofuel consumed near where it is produced cuts transportation costs and, for the military, improves energy security."

"These pioneer plants will demonstrate advanced technologies to produce infrastructure-compatible, drop-in renewable fuels from America's abundant biomass resources," said Energy Secretary Chu. "It will support development of a new, rural-focused industry that will replace imported crude oil with secure, renewable fuels made here in the U.S."

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16003>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16002>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16001>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15999>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=16000>

(August 15)

**MANY ANNOUNCEMENTS COMING OUT OF
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S MIDWEST TOUR**

Almost every department in President Obama's cabinet is working on programs for rural America. President Barack Obama says he's seeking ways to help small and midsized farms who are being squeezed in today's economy. During a town hall meeting in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, President Obama talked about farm exports being on the rise. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack answered the question why is the President devoting so much attention and resources to sparsely populated rural areas?

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15987>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15986>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15989>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15988>

**THERE ARE HISTORIC SCHOOL NUTRITION IMPROVEMENTS
AS CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL**

The school nutrition reforms delivered through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) are improving the nutritional quality of school meals and bolstering the entire school environment. Click [here](#) for new USDA Foods being offered to schools this year. Under Secretary Kevin Concanon also announced that schools nationwide reached First Lady Michelle Obama's goal of 1,250 schools receiving HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSC) honors for expanding nutrition and physical activity opportunities.

"The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is a great win for our kids and the health of our nation," said Concanon. "I want to recognize the hundreds of schools that have already made great progress toward achieving school meals reforms – and can serve as models for others seeking to make improvements. By fueling our nation's children with the healthiest foods possible while at school, we can reinforce the healthy lifestyles that many parents are already teaching their children at home, which will put them in a position to thrive, grow and ultimately reach their full potential."

The USDA launched the [Healthy Access Locator](#), a web-based resource that geographically pinpoints HUSC award-winning schools and features built-in data on diet-related diseases. The web-based map allows users to search HealthierUS School Challenge awards by geography (national, regional, local), school type (elementary, middle, high), award type (bronze, silver, gold, gold award of distinction) and date of award.

These school food improvements will be supported by other changes in the school environment, such as physical activity and nutrition education reforms, and strengthened local school wellness policies. School meals reach nearly 32 million children each school day nationwide, and many children consume as many as half their daily calories at school.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15984>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15985>

USDA ADMINISTRATOR MEETS WITH LOUISIANA COMMUNITY TO DISCUSS JOB CREATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RURAL REVITALIZATION

Rural Business and Cooperatives Administrator Judy Canales met with rural business owners, farmers and citizens today to discuss ways federal, state and local officials can work together to improve economic conditions and create jobs. "Maintaining strong rural communities is vital not only to the people and businesses in this area, but also to Louisiana's entire economy," says Canales.

The roundtable discussion gives government leaders an opportunity to hear directly from business leaders around the country about their ideas on how to grow the economy. They also are intended to educate participants about USDA programs and other federal resources that help rural businesses, residents and communities.

USDA Rural Development, for example, offers more than 40 programs to help rural residents buy or repair homes, rent affordable apartments, start or expand businesses, build or expand broadband networks, build or upgrade drinking water and wastewater systems, and provide essential services such as schools, libraries, fire and police protection, and health care facilities.

Contact: Brittany D. Schmidt (318) 473-7811

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For more agriculture news go to www.usda.gov and click Newsroom on the toolbar.

Also, check out the [USDA Blog](#)



FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 34.11 – A shortage of workers for labor intrinsic farm operations, due in part to stricter immigration and farm labor policies on many level, has led to study and discussion of the greater impacts. Susan Carter and Rod Bain take a look at this issue in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 34.11 – A Historic Agreement For Biofuels And The Navy. Improving Health Care For Rural Americans. Stewardship Battles Invasive Species. Back To School Time Brings Concerns. Packing A School Lunch Is A Lot More Complex Than It Used To Be.

AG UPDATE CD # 34.11 – Rule Proposed Animal Disease Traceability System. A Hotter, Tighter Corn Market Developing. World Wheat Production To Climb As US Crop Drops. The Extreme Weather Dichotomy Of Kansas. Drought Damage Effects Producers Bottom Line.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – August 23 - Crop Weather (WAOB). August 29 – Crop Progress Report (NASS). **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The Radio Newsline carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.**

Access the Radio Newsline at 202-720-6776, 5PM ET or go to www.usda.gov, click on Newsroom at top of page, scroll down on right side of page to Radio and TV.

Then click on Daily Radio News Service or Weekly Radio Feature Service.

Questions on USDA Radio's Features, fax name, station, and address to 202-690-2165.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

Preventing Runoff In California

USDA is working with farmers to keep runoff from reaching California's Monterey Bay

YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJTeRp2-jg&feature=channel_video_title
A new TV feature is available on the USDA FTP site

Filename: California Project

Download instructions:

The host: <ftp://ocbmtcmmedia.download.akamai.com>

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264), MPEG 4, MPEG2 and HDV

Please email bob.ellison@usda.gov if you have problems or suggestions

Also, use this free ftp client if you have problems

<http://filezilla-project.org/download.php?type+client>

OFF MIKE

DRIER WEATHER IMPACTS ON CORN AND SOYBEAN PROGRESS – So far, drier weather in the corn and soybean belt is helping crop maturity.

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15990>

CORN BELT HEAT GROWING CONCERN FOR CROP DEVELOPMENT – While not as hot as July, some pockets of the Corn Belt are worried about lingering heat during a crucial time of crop development.

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15998>

CROP PROGRESS UPDATES FOR WHEAT AND PASTURELAND – Winter wheat harvest is nearing completion and Spring wheat harvest is getting underway. Pastures are reported in bad shape.

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15991>

BRIEF RESPITE FROM DROUGHT IN SOUTHERN PLAINS – Needed moisture has fallen this past week in the drought stricken Southern Plains, but will it be enough to help the winter wheat crop?

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15997>

WILLIE NELSON'S CONNECTION TO AGRICULTURE – **Ken Root** (WHO-TV – Des Moines, Iowa www.whotv.com/) was part of a ceremony in Kansas City on Saturday, August 13 to induct noted country singer Willie Nelson into the National Agricultural Hall of Fame. The legendary Nelson started Farm Aid back in 1985 and has held it for 26 years. The event has raised over \$40 million dollars to assist family farmers. **Root** says Nelson is only the 39th person inducted into the National Agricultural Hall of Fame. Others include Norman Bourlaug, John Deere, J.I. Case, Abraham Lincoln and Luther Burbank.

Ken Root is a past member of the Board of Directors of the National Agricultural Hall of Fame and the National Agriculture Center located in Bonner Springs, Kansas. He's also past president and past executive director of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting.



From left to right are Dave Matthews, Neil Young, John, Willie Nelson and Ken Root

***Broadcasters if you have any humanitarian or community service events
you'd like to share please forward to susan.carter@oc.usda.gov.
We love to hear about what you're doing and
share it with others in the farm broadcaster family.***

From all of us to all of you ... thank you for what you do

USDA Broadcasters Letter
United States Department of Agriculture
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call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).*